Vol. XI. Numb. 29.

THE OBSERVATOR.

England *loſt its Conqueſts in* France *by Diviſions at Home, and Diſunion with the* Scots. *The* French *Kings enlarg'd their Dominions by their own Treachery, and the Weakneſs and Neglect of our Princes.* Lewis XI.*'s Character, his way of Treating with his Neighbours, and Oppreſſing his own Subjects; which may ſerve for a Caveat to our Friends at* Utrecht.

From **Saturday**, April 5. to **Wedneſday**, April 9. 1712.

Obſ. WEll, *Roger*, let me have the reſt of your Weſt Country Brother's Performance; and tell me how he and you'd diſpoſe of the Dominions of *France*, if the thing were in your power?

Countrym. In troth, Maſter, I have but a general Notion, that the *French* Tyrant holds too much, and I'd have him have leſs if I could; but pray, Maſter, how did *France* become ſo great a Country at this day, when heretofore, as I have heard, other Countrys were as good as it?

Obſ. In former days, *Roger*, the *Engliſh* held very great and large Territorys within the Kingdom of *France*; nay, our King *Edward* III. and after him King *Henry* V. claim'd and conquer'd in a manner the whole Kingdom.

Countrym. But how came we to loſe all this again, Maſter?

Obſ. Our own Diviſions at home, *Roger*, ever fatal to our ſelves, and our want of an Union with *Scotland*, which now that we have it ſome People do all they can to diſſolve by violent Meaſures, loſt us *France*. For tho King *Henry* VI. of *England* was crown'd King of *France* in *Paris*, yet our own Diſtractions at home gave Opportunity to King *Charles* VII. of *France*, aſſiſted by the *Scots*, to recover all that Kingdom from us, except *Calais*, which we loſt too in Queen *Mary*'s days. But before this, *Roger*, *France* had enlarged her Dominions through the Weakneſs and Negligence of ours and other Princes. Thus *Philip de Valois* King of *France* bought the Province of *Dauphine* from *Humbert* Prince of that Country, who upon the Sale made it one of the Conditions, That the Eldeſt Son of the Kings of *France* in all time coming ſhould be ſtil'd and call'd *Dauphin* of *France* The ſame King *Philip* of *Valois* bought alſo of *James* of *Arragon* King of *Majorca*, the Countys of *Rouſſillon* and *Cerdagne* among the *Pyrenean* Mountains; as alſo the Barony of *Montpellier*, which the Houſe of *Arragon* held in Fee of the Crown of *France*. *Lewis* XI. Son of *Charles* VII. whom you and I, *Roger*, ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak a little further of by and by, added more by Fraud and a *Portocarero* Will, than fair Dealing, that rich and plentiful Country call'd *Provence*, wherein ſtand the Two famous Sea Ports of *Marſeilles* and *Thoulon*; And the ſame *Lewis*, after a year and half's Siege, took the ſtrong Town of *Perpignan* from the *Spaniards*, and by this means ſecur'd to the Crown of *France* the Province of *Rouſſillon*, which his Predeceſſor had purchas'd. *Charles* the VIIIth, Son to this *Lewis* XIth, (if he were his Son, for many think him Suppoſititious) got the Dutchy of *Bretagne*, by marrying the Heireſs of it, and annex'd it to the Crown of *France*; And I think I may ſay, *Roger*, that the Memory of our King *Henry* VIIth is ſcarce to be forgiven, becauſe he did not hinder it. For how great a Plague the Ports of *Breſt* and *St. Maloes* have been to our *Engliſh* Merchants, and the Caſtle of *Dinant* to our poor *Engliſh* Sailors when taken Priſoners, the World but too well knows; and all theſe lay in the Duchy of *Bretagne*, which by our Naval Force we might have prevented being added to *France*.

Countrym. Here's a great deal on't, Maſter; I hope you han't much more.

Obſ. Yes, *Roger*, to omit the Attempts made by *Charles* the VIIIth, *Lewis* the XIIth, and *Francis* the Iſt, Kings of *France*, upon the Kingdom of *Naples* and Dutchy of *Milan*, which came all to nothing, I muſt tell you, That King *Henry* IVth of *France*, by his Mother *Jane D'Albret*, ſucceeded to the Kingdom of *Navarre*, and annex'd it to the Crown of *France*, when that Kingdom fell to him by Inheritance. Since which time the *French* Kings have ſtil'd themſelves Kings of *France* and of *Navarre*. *Lewis* XIIIth, no very great Prince in himſelf, yet by the Miniſtry of Cardinal *Richlieu*, enlarg'd his Bounds every way. And for the preſent Grand Monarch *Lewis* XIVth, *Roger*, we will diſcourſe of him more before we have ended this Converſation. In the mean time let us look a little backward to the Reign of *Lewis* XIth, who was a very ſubtle and tricking Prince, and the very Pattern whom *Lewis* XIVth has follow'd.

Countrym. What of him, Maſter?

Obſ. Their own Hiſtorian *Mezeray* ſays of him, *Roger*, that he was "a wicked Son, an "ill Father, an unfaithful Husband, an unjuſt "Brother, an ungrateful Maſter, and a dange-"rous Friend: He Reign'd without Counſel, "without Pity, and without Juſtice. His Di-"verſion was to deceive, his only Vertue Cun-"ning, and his greateſt Favourite the Hangman "*Triſtan*.

Countrym. I'll warrant, Maſter, he muſt have been ſuch another Cut throat as our late *George* Lord *Jefferies*.

Obſ. Aye, *Roger*, you've hit him right.

Countrym. A very hopeful Character indeed, Maſter; he was certainly a fit Servant for ſuch a Maſter; But pray what Feats did this King *Lewis* do?

Obſ.

Obſ. Why, *Roger*, not content to enjoy that noble Kingdom of *France*, wherein he had Opportunity to have made himſelf belov'd at home, and fear'd abroad, his Conduct was ſo cruel and terrible, that he drew upon himſelf the Hatred of his Subjects, as well as of his Neighbours: But as he had Cunning enough to deceive, divide, and then cut off, or hang up the beſt and greateſt of his own Subjects; ſo, in his Treaties with his Neighbours, eſpecially the *Engliſh*, he trick'd and play'd as arch a Game, as any *Lewis*, his Nameſake, that ever ſhall ſucceed him, can do.

Countrym. For any thing I can perceive, Maſter, all the *French* Kings have been tricking and faithleſs Princes.

Obſ. Not ſo neither, *Roger*, moſt of 'em, indeed, were ſo; yet ſome of them have been Men of Honour, and I will give you one extraordinary Inſtance. King *John* of *France* being Priſoner to our brave *Edward* III. was enlarg'd, and allow'd to go home, and left his younger Son for an Hoſtage till the Terms agreed on could be fulfill'd. But this young Prince, contrary to the Publick Faith, made his Eſcape, and went to *France*; at which his Father was ſo much incens'd, that he honeſtly return'd to King *Edward*, and yielded himſelf Priſoner again in proper Perſon, and ſo continued till he dy'd, in the Palace of the *Savoy*, leaving this Memorable Saying behind him, as the Cauſe of his Return, *That though Faith and Truth were baniſh'd out of the World, yet they ought for ever to remain Sacred in the Mouth of Kings.*

Countrym. O! my Heart, Maſter, neither this nor the other King *Lewis* knew any thing of his Character; but pray go on with the Story of *Lewis* XI. for the ſake of our Friends at *Utrecht*.

Obſ. I have formerly given you an Account, *Roger*, of the ſhameful Treaty he trick'd our *Edward* IV. and his Courtiers into by Bribery; but ſhall now tell you further.

This King *Lewis* XI. after a full Accommodation, and Peace made with his own Great Men at home, he inſtituted the Order of St. *Michael*, in hopes by it, as my Author ſays, to bring all the Great Men in the Kingdom together in one Room, under pretence of holding a Chapter to confer the Order, and then to ſeize them: But the Dukes of *Bretagne* and *Burgundy*, Sovereign Princes in their own ſeveral Countries, though Homagers to *France*, ſmoak'd the Bite, and refuſed to come; and the latter, in Defiance to his *Kingcraft*, accepted from our King *Edward* IV. the Order of the Garter, and wore it to his dying Day.

Countrym. But pray, Maſter, how did *Lewis* XI. behave himſelf in his Treaties with Foreign Princes?

Obſ. To be ſhort, *Roger*, this Duke *Charles* of *Burgundy*, Sovereign of the Low Countries, was ſo kind to this King *Lewis*'s Brother, *Charles* the *Monſieur*, whom the greateſt Princes and beſt Nobility of *France* follow'd, as to enter *France* with a powerful Army, to bring this their King, who had trod all their Laws and Privileges under Foot, to Reaſon: This was call'd, *A War for the Publick Good*, wherein there were many Skirmiſhes, and one great Battle fought not far from *Paris*; but at laſt, it ended in a Peace to the ſeeming Satisfaction of all the Parties. The King's Brother had the Dukedom of *Normandy* conferr'd on him, but took away from him again in leſs than three Months time; and had afterwards a Doſe given him, that ſent him into t'other World: and the Duke of *Nemours*, another of thoſe confederated Lords, contrary to the publick Faith, was ſeiz'd, and had his Head cut off. The Duke of *Burgundy* was no ſooner arrived in his Country, and had disbanded his Troops, but *Lewis* XI. fell upon his Frontiers, having at the ſame time rais'd a dangerous Rebellion againſt him among his own Subjects at Ghent and Liege; ſo that this poor Prince muſt have been ruin'd in a ſhort time, had it not been for the Aſſiſtance of ſome of his old Friends, and particularly of our King *Edward* IV. This, I hope, is enough to ſhew what Care our Friends at *Utrecht* ought to take in treating with *Lewis* XI. But more of this next time, *Roger*. Good Night.

Errata. *In our laſt, Col.* 3. *L.* 14. *r. there or here. L.* 20. *r. Years ago.*

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